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ABSTRACT

This kit looks at 10 works of art from ancient to modern times and explores their myths, histories, artistic styles, and stories about art and artists. The kit includes goals and background information, 10 slides with slide presentation, art and writing activities, 5 laminated reproductions, and a bibliography. Activities are related to the 10 images: (1) "Hydria" (Psiax); (2) "St. George and the Dragon" (Claude Lorrain); (3) "Louis XVI Saying Farewell to His Family" (Mather Brown); (4) "Hairdresser's Window" (John Sloan); (5) "The Young Lady With a Shiner" (Norman Rockwell); (6) "Sunbather" (Duane Hanson); (7) "The Painter" (Pablo Picasso); (8) "SHE-BA" (Romare Bearden); (9) "The Lawrence Tree" (Georgia O'Keeffe); and (10) "Apparition of Face and Fruit Dish on a Beach" (Salvador Dali). (MM)

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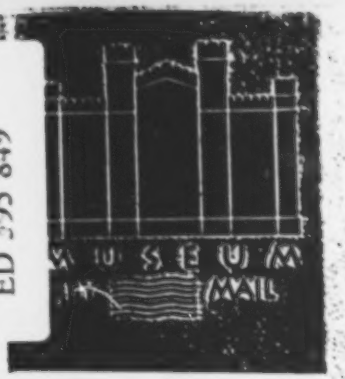

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WADSWORTH ATHENEUM

MARTIN OFFICE OF MUSEUM EDUCATION

600 MAIN STREET

HARTFORD, CT 06103

(203) 278-2670, X-322

Dear Teacher:

The Martin Office of Museum Education at the Wadsworth Atheneum is pleased to offer a new resource to you and your students: **Museum by Mail.** You may use this classroom guide as a pre-visit lesson before your museum visit or as a valuable art experience in itself.

This **Museum by Mail** classroom guide is called **Art Tells a Story** and explores some of the many stories told in paintings and sculpture. Students will look at and learn about ten works of art from ancient to modern times and explore their myths, histories, artistic styles, and stories about art and artists. They will also work on descriptive writing activities and art projects which correspond to the concepts explored in the enclosed slides and reproductions.

This **Museum by Mail** kit includes:

* Goals and Background Information
* 10 Slides and Slide Presentation
* Art and Writing Activities
* 5 Laminated Reproductions
* Bibliography
* Return Instructions

Each section of the **Art Tells a Story** classroom guide contains information and suggested activities to stimulate new interest in looking at and learning about art and (when possible) to prepare your group for a trip to the art museum.

We know you'll enjoy this lesson and look forward to seeing you and your students at the museum.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Cormier
Curator of Education

Gail Holzrichter
Cigna Associate Curator of
Education for School Programs

Please contact Susan Werner, Tour Coordinator, at 278-2670, ext. 323 for additional **Museum by Mail** information.

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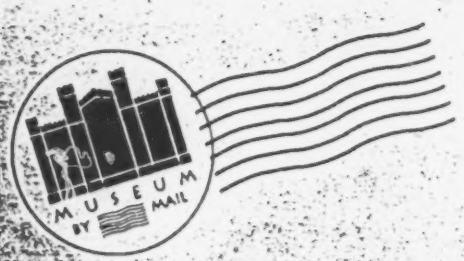

ART TELLS A STORY

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A·R·T TELLS A·STORY

SECTION 1

GOALS
BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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Section 1

Art Tells A Story
Goals and Background Information

I. Goals:

1. To offer classroom activities which introduce elementary school students to the Wadsworth Atheneum's collections.

2. To expand upon students' classroom experiences in art and art appreciation.

3. To develop creative connections between fine art and other disciplines by incorporating writing and art activities into **Museum by Mail** kits.

4. To offer an informative, relevant, and exciting way to make art accessible to young people.

5. To introduce the theme of stories in art to elementary school children.

II. Objectives:

The students will:

1. Understand that art history is a record of people's visual expression through the ages;

2. Learn the stories of ten different works of art from ancient to modern times and about the artists who created them;

3. Study the variety of ways in which stories can be told in art;

4. Learn ways to look carefully at art to discover visual clues, objects, symbols, myths, and stories which may help to reveal the meaning in a work of art;

5. Observe and learn about the physical appearance; paint application; materials; form; structure; and technical background about painting and sculpture;

6. Observe subject matter; interpretive, imaginative, historical, and expressive qualities in works of art that tell stories;

7. Compare, contrast, discuss, and make judgements about the art by viewing slides and printed reproductions;

8. Create original story-based art projects and writing activities which demonstrate knowledge of the above.

III. Background Information

The first visual stories made by humans were in the cave paintings found in the Altamira grotto in Northern Spain. Ancient cave dwelling "artists" expressed their symbolic stories of animal and bison hunts eloquently and simply on the walls of their cave homes. It is believed that these magical paintings contained spiritual messages which would assist them in future hunts. But no one really knows for sure. It is possible these images were painted for purely artistic reasons, perhaps to add wall decoration and "hunting lore" to the sparse surroundings of the cave. These ancient stories of frolicking bison and horses provide us with a great deal of information. They describe the kinds of animals that lived at that time. They tell us that cave people were hunters, not farmers. The paintings also suggest that art was integrated into pre-historic man's lifestyle (and that there were skilled artists among the people who were able to observe and render realistic drawings of natural things). Most importantly these images create a link between pre-historic and 20th-century man.

Thousands of years later the ancient Egyptian civilization created another visual language called hieroglyphics. Hieroglyphics are made up of figures or objects representing words and sounds to form an ancient alphabet (system of writing), usually performed by scribes. This ancient alphabet is very appealing to young people as messages can be told through pictures (like an ancient comic strip).

The strength and tradition of story telling through the visual arts continues today. Just as people long ago invented picture stories to record important events in their lives, artists today feel the same desire to record and express modern life.

The images in the slides and reproductions in this kit tell many different kinds of stories. There are mythological tales which tell fantastic stories of gods and dragons; historical paintings describing actual events in history; everyday scenes showing people in their daily activities; artists's personal autobiographical stories; and surreal, abstract, or imaginative stories made up of unusual objects, color, and shapes. Part of the discovery will be in decoding these stories to identify ones that are factual and others that are fantastic. Another important part is learning the language of art and artists. This language is made up of key concepts integral to all great works of art and include, perspective, color, line, and composition.

The theme of story telling is universal. All people have oral, written, and visual stories to tell. The slides and reproductions will inspire students to learn new stories through art and invent their own visual and written stories.

IV. Teacher Slide Presentation (Section 2)

You do not have to be an art historian to do a good job with this slide presentation. Just be sure to look at the slides and read the **Art Tells a Story Slide Presentation** before the lesson. You may want to make a copy of the **Art Tells a Story Slide Presentation** and highlight specific passages, ideas, or suggested discussion questions. Because these mini-essays were written with the general teacher in mind, consider modifying the materials to the level and interest of your students. Remember, this is not a script! Use parts of each mini-essay and create your own script.

V. Before the Slides: The Fluorescent Green Eyeball

Each kit contains fluorescent green eyeball stickers. These stickers are real "ice breakers" before the slide presentation. Before showing the slides, pass the stickers out to each student in your class. Invite your kids to place the eyeball somewhere on their body (head, arm, knee, etc...). Now they have a third eye. This third eye is a symbol for their creative eye. It is the inner eye, the all-knowing, all-seeing eye.

In a fun and imaginative way this sticker will act as a third eye to help your students see, feel, and explore the art works in new and different ways.

VI. Writing and Art Activities (Section 3)

Writing and art activities may be done before, during, or after the slide presentation. Most of the activities do not require special artistic skills or supplies. These activities reinforce concepts introduced in the kit.

A·R·T TELLS A·STORY

SECTION 2

ART TELLS A STORY SLIDE PRESENTATION
SLIDES

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Section 2

Art Tells a Story
Slide List and Presentation

1. Psiax, Greek. Hydria. Clay, wheel-made, black-figure painted, 530-500 B.C.

2. Claude Lorrain (Claude Gellée) (1600 - 1682), French, St. George and the Dragon. Oil on canvas, c. 1643.

3. Mather Brown (1761 - 1831), American. Louis XVI Saying Farewell to his Family. Oil on canvas, c. 1793.

4. John Sloan (1871 - 1951), American. Hairdresser's Window. Oil on canvas, 1907.

5. Norman Rockwell (1894 - 1978), American. The Young Lady with a Shiner. Oil on canvas, 1953.

6. Duane Hanson (1925 -), American. Sunbather. Polyester and fiberglass polychromed in oil, 1971.

7. Pablo Picasso (1881 - 1973), Spanish. The Painter. Oil on canvas, 1934.

8. Romare Bearden (1912 - 1988), American. SHE-BA. Collage on composition board, 1970.

9. Georgia O'Keeffe (1887 - 1986), American. The Lawrence Tree. Oil on canvas, 1929.

10. Salvador Dali (1904 - 1988), Spanish. Apparition of Face and Fruit-dish on a Beach. Oil on canvas, 1938.

Art Tells a Story Slide Presentation

1. Psiax (sigh-ax), Greek. Hydria. Clay, wheel-made, black-figured painted, 530-500 B.C.

Suggested Discussion Questions

a. Look at the shape and design of this vessel; can you imagine what it was used for?

b. This hydria is made of clay and was formed on a potter's wheel. Have you ever worked with clay? If so, what did you make? Did you ever use a potter's wheel? Is it easy or hard to use? Where does clay come from?

c. Greek vases are often decorated with scenes from the everyday life of Greek people. The painting on the body of this vessel shows men harnessing their horses for a chariot race. If an artist showed the same scene today, what might he/she replace the horses with? (Racing car, bicycles, motorcycles, scooters?)

In ancient Greece you may have found this extraordinary vessel in someone's home. The ancient Greeks were well known for creating a variety of hand-shaped and wheel-made clay pots which were made and used for specific purposes. This vessel is called a hydria and was used as a water jar to store spring water.

Greek vases were decorated in two techniques, black figure and red figure. This hydria is decorated in the black figure technique. As you can see, the figures are black against a red background. The parts of the pot, from the bottom up are known as foot, body, shoulder, neck, mouth, and handle.

There are two stories depicted on this vessel. The shoulder scene shows the mythological tale of Heracles struggling with the sea god Triton. The old sea god Nereus (seated) looks on majestically while two women run in on the left. (This scene may be difficult to see in the slide). The main body scene shows men harnessing their horses to a chariot. There are six men, three horses, a hunting dog, a pigeon, and a chariot filling the curved surface.

Although unsigned, this vase is attributed to a well known Greek vase painter named Psiax. Psiax's use of over-lapping profiles and equipment gives the scene some depth and a sense that the group will soon be in motion. The line work is quite skillful as we can see different hairstyles, faces, features, and horses' manes and harnesses.

2. Claude Lorrain (Claude Gellée) (1600- 1682), French, St. George and the Dragon. Oil on canvas, about 1643.

Suggested Discussion Questions

a. What is the first thing you see when you look at this painting?

b. If you could paint a picture of a dragon, what would it look like? Would it be an evil dragon or a good luck dragon?

c. Can you think of any other stories you know whose message is good over evil? (It can be a comic book story).

d. In the Greek vase we just looked at, the artist used the technique of overlapping to show depth. What techniques does this artist use to show distance and depth? (perspective, overlapping, diminishing size)

Another horse, another man...another dragon?! This painting tells the story of St. George and the dragon. Legend tells us that there was a dragon who lived in a dark cave near Silena in Libya. To appease this ferocious dragon the townspeople fed him sheep until one day none were left. They then had to offer the dragon young girls instead. The painting shows the exact moment when St. George comes charging in on his horse, slays the dragon, and rescues the girl. You can see the young girl with arms raised fleeing the scene, while townspeople watch from the wooded areas above and on the left side.

This story is also an allegory, which means each character has a special meaning. In European folklore the hero, St. George, represents goodness, the young girl innocence and gentleness, and the dragon evil and wickedness. This allegorical story suggests good triumphs over evil.

In St. George and the Dragon the artist created a painting we can walk into with our eyes. This painting uses a realistic perspective system, which gives depth to the painting. One rule of perspective is that if you draw two parallel lines (as in a road going into the distance) the two sides will appear to meet at a point on the horizon. The horizon is where the sky and land meet.

This painting is a landscape with people in it. There is a foreground (front) where the main action is taking place, a middleground where you can see shrubbery, people, and buildings, and a background where the village, mountains, and sky meet. The artist, Claude Lorrain, was considered to be the master of "ideal landscapes, in which an ordered and spacious nature provides a harmonious home for civilized humanity."

3. Mather Brown (1761 - 1831), American. Louis XVI Saying Farewell to his Family. Oil on canvas, c. 1793.

Suggested Discussion Questions

a. Who is the man in the middle of this painting? Who are the people surrounding him? Describe some of the expressions on their faces; do they appear happy? Angry? Hysterical? Horrified? Doomed? Cheerful?

b. Where does this story take place?

c. Who are the men on the left side of the painting and why are they there?

d. How would you compare the clothes these people are wearing to the clothes we wear today?

e. Once you have discussed the story, do you feel sorry for the King? Why? Why not?

Exciting stories of dramatic events such as battles, banquets, and executions are passed down through books, newspapers, and paintings. Artists often get their ideas for paintings from such historical subjects. This is a historical painting depicting Louis XVI (the deposed French king) saying goodbye to his family. He would be put on trial for treason and executed the following day. Until the French Revolution in 1792, the French government was ruled by a king. Following the Revolution, much of the French royalty was executed and a new government based on the principles of democracy was established.

How does the artist tell us this enormous story in only one scene? The light streaming through the prison cell bars heightens the suspense and drama of the story by lighting the main characters. In the center of this emotion filled painting is a tearful Louis XVI surrounded by his devoted family on the eve of his execution, each with specific gestures and poses. The woman behind the king with her arms raised is his wife Marie Antoinette, gesturing toward the heavens for some divine intervention (help from the Lord above). The soldiers display expressions of horror and cruelty as they watch the family huddle around the king for the last time.

The American artist, Mather Brown, worked much of his life in England. He painted portraits of royalty and historical paintings of current events. In his historical paintings he focused on the personal tragedy of war and could move the viewer emotionally through his works.

4. John Sloan (1871 - 1951), American. Hairdresser's Window. Oil on canvas, 1907.

Suggested discussion questions

a. What event is everyone watching? Why do you suppose they are so interested in what is happening through the window?

b. Find the strands of hair tied up on a line outside the window. Why might these be hung there? Is that what beauty salons do today?

c. Does this scene take place in the country or the city? How can you tell?

d. Many of the onlookers are wearing hats. Do we wear the same kinds of hats today? Do the clothes and hats people are wearing give us clues about the time period that this painting was done?

Sometimes the most ordinary and common everyday scenes became subject matter for paintings. These are known as genre scenes of everyday life. Late in the nineteenth and early twentieth century many artists realized that paintings did not have to show grand scenes to be interesting. This painting shows a hairdresser bleaching the hair of a customer in a second floor window, with quite an audience watching from below.

The artist John Sloan describes in his diary the inspiration for this painting: "Walked up to Henri's studio. On the way saw a humorous sight of interest. A window, low second story, bleached blond hair dresser bleaching the hair of a client. A small interested crowd about." Sloan describes the scene he saw walking to his friend's studio one day, but by putting it down on canvas with paint he tells us much more. This vigorously painted scene shows the hustle and bustle of common people in New York City in the early 1900s. Look at the signs and billboards luring shoppers into their stores. Notice the three strands of hair attached to the line outside of the hairdressers window, placed there to let people know the different shades they could color their hair. Observe the different responses to the scene in the window. Imagine the conversation the women in the front are having: "Oh, how shocking!", says one lady as she turns to her friends. One agrees and replies, "Can you believe that? She's bleaching her hair... shameful thing... would you ever do that?" "Yes! Big deal! I came here last week - do you like my hair?" The men stand silently by, and one woman passes without even a glance, (she's just too busy for such nonsense).

John Sloan was a newspaper illustrator as well as a painter who was fascinated by city life. His sketchy style of painting was considered unconventional by the academic establishment of the early twentieth century. Critics labeled Sloan and his peers as "Ashcan" painters because they showed activities of daily, and sometimes grimy, city life.

5. Norman Rockwell (1894 - 1978), American . The Young Lady with a Shiner. Oil on canvas, 1953.

Suggested Discussion Questions

a. What is the first thing you see when you look at this painting?

b. Where is the girl sitting? What has just happened to her? Where is her partner in crime?

c. Do you think she won or lost the fight? What makes you think so?

d. We can see two people in the next room. Who do you think they are and what can you tell about them by the expressions on their faces?

e. Describe the girl's physical characteristics, i.e., clothes, body, hair, face. What kind of personality do you think she has?

f. Have you ever been sent to the principal's office? How did you feel? Were you scared or happy? How does the girl feel about going to see the principal?

This painting, done for the cover of the May 1953 **Saturday Evening Post**, shows another scene from everyday life. The artist and illustrator, Norman Rockwell, was a master at capturing real people in simple, everyday situations. He depicts a young lady, fresh from a school yard fight, black-eye and all, awaiting a meeting with the principal.

The scene is executed with extraordinary clarity and seems almost photographic. The young girl looks straight ahead at the viewer, with a telling grin. She clearly is quite pleased with herself, wearing the "shiner" like a trophy from her recent escapade. Once we have taken a good look at the girl, her hair and braids askew, arms and hands gripping the bench purposefully, shirt untucked with sleeves rolled to the shoulder, bony knees (one with a band aid), knee socks slouched to the ankles and shoes untied we wander farther back into the composition, from the shiny tiled floor, through the door and into the principal's office. We then see the secretary informing the principal of his next visitor.

Through his art, Norman Rockwell was able to evoke an immediate response from thousands of people who saw in it their own self-image of America. Rockwell portrayed the "American Man" - his dreams, triumphs, failures, and pleasures. His illustrated works were seen on countless **Saturday Evening Post** covers, murals, calendars, advertisements, and books.

6. Duane Hanson (1925 -), American. Sunbather. Polyester and fiberglass, polychromed in oil, 1971.

Suggested Discussion Questions

a. Describe what you see. Is this a real person? Or is this a "pretend" person? Is this a sculpture?

b. What are your first impressions of this object?

c. Describe the woman. Look at the magazines, snack foods, and outfit she has on. Have you ever seen anyone that looks like her? What do these clues tell us about her personality?

d. Why would an artist make art about this type of a person? What do you think this work is all about?

As with the last two works we just looked at, this piece also portrays a scene from daily life. This piece differs in a number of ways, but the most obvious is that it is a sculpture and not a painting. When you first encounter this piece, the woman looks so realistic that you can't believe she's not a real live person! The Sunbather portrays an overweight woman sleeping in a flimsy lounge chair. With her "flip-flops" kicked off, snacks and trashy magazines by her side, she soaks in the sun wearing a less than flattering two piece swim suit, with a swim cap and sunglasses perched on top of her head. She appears to be weighing down the chair, with one arm sagging off the arm rest.

What is her story? Several stories may be told about this woman, and as with any object of art, it is open to many interpretations. She may represent a universal person, someone we have all seen before. Or is she the embodiment of our "mindless consumer culture," someone who might be considered anti-intellectual, overweight, lower class, and vulgar? She shows a side of life that is far from ideal. She is extraordinarily fascinating. She may even appear funny to you (on the surface) but as you really get to looking at her, you may begin to feel sorry for her. One may wonder, "Can't she see herself?" But then one might ask, "Can we see ourselves in her?"

The artist Duane Hanson offers us social commentary through art. He suggests that our society idolizes youth and beauty while neglecting its elderly. Through this vivid portrayal of a bloated, isolated figure, Hanson offers the viewer a true-to-life, honest-to-goodness, mundane, average person - blemishes, flab, frump, and all. As a resident of Florida, Hanson says he sees people in this "state of half attire, always trying to catch all the sun they can by exposing their bodies, which are usually out of shape. So it has always been a curiosity on my part to portray types of people you don't dare look at."

The Sunbather cont.

To create these life-size polyester sculptures, Hanson uses live models. Individual body parts are greased with Vaseline, fast drying silicone rubber is applied, sometimes reinforced with plaster, and then cut off with surgical scissors. Next the parts are fused together and the seams are melted to join the body together. To finish the work the body is painted with an airbrush and real or synthetic hair is poked into place.

The Sunbather is one of the Atheneum's most popular works of art and was recently restored; her skin (surface) was washed, swim suit and accessories exchanged and recreated for a fresher version of the sleeping sunbather. (The slide in this packet shows the original, unrestored version of The Sunbather).

7. Pablo Picasso (1881 - 1973), Spanish . The Painter. Oil on canvas, 1934.

Suggested Discussion Questions

a. The works you have seen so far were realistic in style, meaning you were able to clearly identify the subject. This is a more abstract painting, but you can still identify objects and people in it. What is the subject of this painting? How do you know? (Find the painter, the model, flowers in a vase, model stand, etc.)

b. This painting is made up of organic and geometric shapes. Organic shapes are natural, flowing, curving forms that may look like tubes, blobs, or squiggles. Geometric shapes are mathematical forms such as triangles, circles, squares, and rectangles. How many organic shapes can you find? (describe). How many geometric shapes can you find? (describe).

c. This imaginative style of painting shows the subjects from more than one point of view. Can you see a side view? (discuss) Can you see a front view? (discuss)

d. Can you sit in the same position as the artist's model?

e. Is the space in this painting deep (is there a foreground and background) or flat (does everything seem to be on the surface)? Where is the artist in relation to his model? Why do you think so?

A thickly painted, colorful canvas, The Painter by Pablo Picasso is about the relationship between himself and his model Marie-Thérèse Walter. The subject of the painting (artist and model) and the expressive style Picasso used might tell us something about his relationship with this young woman.

Start your exploration on the left side of the canvas. There is a "yellow" artist (person) holding a brush up onto a blue rectangular form or canvas. The artist is looking at his model who is seated on a platform. The model is curiously painted; her body is distorted into organic, blob-like shapes made up of mostly greens and pinks and is together like a mismatched puzzle. She is by far the more elaborate and mesmerizing of the two. But instead of painting the "object of his desire" as glamorous or lovely, Picasso paints her looking like a contorted, monster-like, erotic creature. What does this tell you about the way he feels about this woman? What might this tell you about the way he feels about himself? One may speculate that Picasso was romantically involved with this young woman and that his passion for her and life's overwhelming turmoil inspired this direct and expressive painting.

Pablo Picasso is probably the most famous artist of the twentieth century. He was a master of many artistic disciplines including painting, sculpture, drafting, printmaking, and set design. Picasso worked in several different styles throughout his career and is credited for pioneering major artistic developments, such as cubism, collage, and construction. Picasso's works dealt with art and life and focused on his deeply felt concern for the human condition.

8. Romare Bearden (1929 - 1988), American. SHE-BA. Collage on composition board, 1970.

Suggested Discussion Questions

a. What is a collage? Have you ever made one?

b. What is the subject of this collage?

c. Who is this woman? (You may not know her from T.V. or the movies, but the artist places objects on and around her to help us figure out who this special person might be). Discuss the objects she wears and holds and the things surrounding her.

d. Who is the person behind her?

e. Even though there is no visible sun shining down on the two people, how do we know it is a sunny day?

f. Find the zig-zags, polka dots, checkers, and feet in this picture.

g. Is the space in this art work deep (is there a foreground and background) or flat (does everything seem to be on the surface)? (Discuss, elaborate). Can you tell which figures are in front of each other, or do they all appear to be on the surface of the work?

In Romare Bearden's SHE-BA collage we find great variety. The colors, textures, patterns, rectangles, stripes, zig-zags, and squares create a visual symphony for our eyes. The composition of a seated figure is made up of a brilliant variety of flat materials (colored paper, photographic paper, fabric, paint, crayons) and is called a collage. The dominant colors in this work are red, green, and black which are the traditional, symbolic colors of the Continent of Africa. The woman holding the Egyptian-inspired scepter (a cane with a curve at the top) is the Queen of She-ba, an ancient kingdom whose population settled Ethiopia. She holds her head high; with a wave of a hand exudes pride for herself and her people. Behind her stands a priest offering her shade with a parasol.

From the beauty and complexity of this collage, it is no wonder that Bearden is one of the most admired African-American artists of the twentieth century. He was a student of history, mythology, and ritual. Through his art he was able to communicate the traditions, history, and contributions of the black people to world culture.

9. Georgia O'Keeffe (1887 - 1986), American . The Lawrence Tree. Oil on canvas, 1929.

Suggested Discussion Questions

a. Where was the artist when she painted this picture? Was she: above the tree looking down; beside the tree looking straight at it; or below the tree looking up? How do you know?

b. Discuss foreshortening. How did the artist make the tree top look so far away?

c. What time of day is it? What season is it? What type of tree is this?

d. Is there something special or extraordinary about this tree? What do you think inspired O'Keeffe to study it and paint it?

e. Do you have a favorite tree to sit by, climb on, play around?

f. Have you ever drawn a tree? Was it easy or difficult?

Did you ever lay flat on your back beneath a tree and gaze upwards past the thick tree trunk, bark, branches, twigs, leaves, with the blue sky as the backdrop? A tree from this position is something to marvel at. The artist Georgia O'Keeffe must have thought so too, because that is exactly the position from which she decided to paint The Lawrence Tree. (Sometimes in the museum we actually lay down on the floor below the painting to get just the right view!) O'Keeffe painted this large pine tree at night with an aqua sky, twinkling stars, green needles, and sturdy limbs which seem to wave like arms. Do you think you could climb this tree? Looking up from below, the artist uses a technique called foreshortening which makes the tree seem far up in the sky. The tree is squashed or foreshortened to draw us up and into the imaginary space of the tree, into the magical night sky.

This was one of O'Keeffe's favorite paintings. She had a very special way of seeing and was inspired by natural things like bones, stones, flowers, and clouds. (She used to visit friend, the writer D.H. Lawrence, and his wife, Mabel Dodge Luhan, in New Mexico and ultimately moved there. This tree, a ponderosa pine, grew on Lawrence's ranch. She describes the unusual perspective she selected for the position of the tree:

> "I spent several weeks up at the Lawrence ranch that summer. There was a long weathered carpenter's bench under the tall tree in front of the little old house that Lawrence lived in there. I often lay on that bench looking up into the tree—past the trunk and up into the branches. It was particularly fine at night with the stars above the tree."

10. Salvador Dali (1904 - 1988), Spanish. Apparition of Face and Fruit-dish on a Beach. Oil on canvas, 1938.

Suggested Discussion Questions

a. Look at this slide for 10 seconds, then turn away from it. Invite your students to raise their hands and tell you one thing they remembered seeing. Then everyone should face the image to discuss and rediscover things they might have missed the first time around. Can everyone see "man's best friend?" What is the dog made out of?

b. What is going on in this painting?

c. Where is this scene taking place?

d. Describe in words the mood or feeling this picture gives you.

e. Have you ever described a dream to a friend? Written down a dream? Drawn a dream? Is this painting something like a dream? In what ways?

f. This is a surrealist painting. Discuss surrealism.

This is no ordinary day at the beach. This is a surrealist beach, a place where things turn into other things right before your eyes! The artist Salvador Dali was a leading figure of the surrealist movement. Many of the surrealists painted objects and ideas with absolute realism, much like the techniques we saw in the art of Norman Rockwell. The difference is not the way surrealists painted but what they painted. You may want to think about this painting as if it were a strange dream.

The entire painting is made up of double images. The central form of a face turns into a fruit dish, the body of the dog is both a landscape and a bowl of fruit, the dog's snout is a sandy path, his collar is a viaduct for water to flow through, and the foreground is both a beach and a tabletop. (Take time to locate more of these double images). Within this "dog-landscape" are layers of reality and fantasy, strewn with people, objects, and ruins.

The surrealist images which Dali painted came from his deepest thoughts, his unconscious mind, and irrational imaginings. These thoughts were more than realistic: they were surrealistic or super-realistic. Dali's technical genius allowed his to make the most outrageous and unrelated images appear believable. Dali was a flamboyant character in his public life and among other things was universally recognized for wearing a handlebar style moustache.

As a follow up to this slide presentation do some of the writing and art activities in Section 3.

A·R·T TELLS A·STORY

SECTION 3

WRITING AND ART ACTIVITIES

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Section 3

Art Tells a Story
Writing and Art Activities

The following activities offer creative ideas for writing and art projects based on stories in art. These activities explore a number of exciting ways to engage your students in descriptive and problem solving projects. Whenever possible try to insert subject matter that you are currently studying in the classroom to create a link between your classroom curriculum and the **Museum by Mail** project.

A. Bulletin Board: A Story Board

Consider doing this warm-up Story Board activity before you show the slides.

Designate and create a class bulletin board for the **Art Tells A Story** project. Title it with the words "A Story Board: Art Tells a Story." Pull out the 5 laminated reproductions from **Section 4** and tack them up on the middle of the board at eye level. Throughout the project use this board for exhibiting finished writing and art activities.

Introduce **Art Tells A Story** using the bulletin board as a focal point. Begin your exploration with following questions to stimulate students interest.

Suggested discussion questions:

- Where do we find stories? (people, books, television, songs, movies, ballet, puppet shows, magazines, theater, art)
- Where do stories come from? (everyday life, history, myth, legend, folklore, the Bible, fantasy)
- Describe a story from everyday life: a myth, a legend, a story from history, the Bible, or a fantasy story.
- Now let's look at the pictures on this board. These art works tell stories. What kinds of stories do they tell?
- Discuss and describe the various stories in the reproductions. Are they all the same? Were they all made by the same artist? How can you tell?
- Compare two different works of art. In what ways are they the same? In what ways are they different? Which do you like better? Why?

Materials: Bulletin board, five laminated reproductions, tacks.

B. Just Imagine...

Unlike a story book which tells its tale with a beginning, middle, and end, a work of art often tells a story in one powerful single image. But just imagine you could create other parts (the beginning, middle, or ending) of Norman Rockwell's painting, The Young Lady with a Shiner. What happened before she was sent to the principal's office? What happens in the principal's office? What happens when she leaves the principal's office?

Pass out three sheets of white paper to each student. Begin the drawing activity by instructing each student to sketch the picture of The Young Lady with a Shiner. Then students must create two other drawings to fill in the other parts of their story. There is no correct order to the story. The Young Lady With A Shiner drawing may be the beginning, middle, or end of the story. Students may include word or sentence "bubbles" like comic strips have. In the end, each student should have invented their own original sequence of pictures which elaborate on Rockwell's original image.

This same idea can be a writing project; instead of the students drawing the story they can write a story surrounding one of the reproductions.

Materials: White paper (8 1/2 x 11), pencils, erasers, laminated reproductions.

C. Story Mobiles

Story Mobiles* may be inspired by either Pablo Picasso's The Painter, or Romare Bearden's SHE-BA. Invite your students to "collect shapes" from these two works by drawing, coloring, and cutting the shapes they see in these reproductions. These shapes can become symbols that tell a story when they are arranged in a sequence from left to right.

Students can attach (staple or hole punch) yarn or string to the top of each shape and then attach the string to a long pre-cut strip of thin cardboard. The ends of the cardboard strip are stapled together to form a circle. Attach two pieces of string to opposite sides of the cardboard ring and tie together, then display on a "clothesline" in your classroom. These stories should be very moving!

Materials: Colored construction or white paper, pencils, crayons, yarn or string cut in various lengths, cardboard strips (poster board weight) staplers, hole punch, a long clothes line or sturdy yarn hung in classroom, laminated reproductions.

* A mobile is a type of moving sculpture invented by the artist Alexander Calder. It is made up of shapes - sometimes made of wood and metal - and connected by rods and wires.)

D. The Expedition

Using all five of the reproductions and **The Expedition Worksheet** (attached) students go on a collecting expedition. Depending on your student's reading levels, you may want to read the clues aloud before your students do the worksheet. To begin, students go on a hunt, identify the five works of art (reproductions) by clues described on the worksheet, and fill in various answers. Once completed allow your students to share their answers aloud, then go on to the writing activity below.

Students may use this worksheet as a spring board and guide to create their own fantasy stories about this special expedition or journey. Allow the students to use some or all of the original sentences on the worksheet to help them travel from one place to the next. (Although, the papers will be more creative if students choose their own way of saying things). Encourage students to develop a fantasy story about the things they saw, people they met, foods they ate, etc. Each story should have a beginning, middle, and an ending. The sequence of the story does not have to match the sequence of artworks on the worksheet. Once complete these stories can be read aloud for the class to hear.

Materials: Five laminated reproductions, the Expedition Worksheet (copied and colated - return original to this section), pencils, notebook paper (for fantasy stories).

E. My Life Story

How would you tell people about your life in a picture? Long ago people created pictures (drawing, symbol writing) to record important or daily events in their lives in order to remember them. Do a drawing, painting, or collage showing an everyday scene or an important event in your life. Try to be accurate and include: clothes you wear, a specific pose, and facial expression, a specific room, the time of day, season of the year, special people in your life, a celebration.

Materials: Paper, pencils, crayons, markers, (or tempera paint, brushes), collage materials, and glue sticks.

F. The Greek Urn

The ancient Greeks told stories on their pottery. Using the Hydria as inspiration, students can create brown paper vessels with action stories on them.

Suggested demonstration for students:

- Fold a large rectangle or square piece of brown kraft paper in half. Using the Hydria reproduction as a guide, draw half of the vessel onto the folded page. Keep the paper folded and cut the shape out. Open the paper and the vase should be symmetrical. You may want to create a template for your students depending on their level.

- Using the Hydria reproduction as a guide, point out the separate sections of the vessel: foot, body, shoulder, neck, mouth, and handles. Students can design decorative patterned bands for the base and shoulder areas and draw some type of action scene for the main body of the pot. Students can use any number of action figures playing sports, leaping dancers, roller skating, sailing ships, or a parade scene. Any topic that shows continuous action will be a good story for the body of the vessel. Use pencil for the original drawing and finish with black and orange-brown crayon, marker, or cray-pas.

Materials: Hydria reproduction, brown kraft paper cut into rectangular or square pieces (enough for your entire class), scissors, pencils, erasers, black markers, black crayons, or black cray-pas. Students may also use various reds, browns, oranges, and rust colors to elaborate on the color areas of the vessel.

G. Fantastic Creatures

The painting St. George and the Dragon, (see slide presentation) shows a dragon who was a scary, scaly, creature, finally captured and killed in order to save a town from its destructive forces. If you could invent a fantastic creature, what would it look like? What color would it be? Would it have special characteristics or attributes? Could it save the world? Would it have the head of a fish and the body of a dog? Would it have three eyes, two mouths, and gills? Draw a picture of this creature with a story to go along with it.

Materials: Paper, pencils, erasers, markers, crayons.

The Expedition Worksheet

You can start your hunt anywhere on this page.

Name: _____

1. I came upon a Queen, the most colorful I've ever seen. Her name was _____. She wore _____ _____. The colors I saw were _____. The man behind her asked me to _____. I took off my _____ because it is hot in
(something you are wearing today)
in _____. The band started to play _____
(country)
_____ and I was on my way.
(a popular song)

2. I could not help but look, in fact I had to stare. Her body in a bikini, why she's practically half bare! Who is she? _____.
Describe her position _____.
Describe her nutrition (food & drink):_____.
Describe her bathing attire and accessories: _____
_____.
List her favorite magazine and yours: _____.
Lying on the beach, can you hear the _____ and _____?
(beach type sounds)
Time for a swim, think I'll invite her in!

3. Now I've landed on a Greek Island and I am very thirsty. I need an "ancient canteen." Here they call a water holder a _____. Describe the drink container you had at lunch: _____. Describe one similarity and one difference between your drink container and this vessel: (Made of the same materials? Has handles?) _____

_____.

I rubbed the side of this pot and all of a sudden _____

_____

_____.

At first I was afraid, but the men were kind and took me on horseback to _____. This is what I saw: _____
(a place, real or imagined)

_____.

4. There's the school bell, I must have been dreaming! Time to get to class. On my way I see a girl in big trouble. I whisper to a friend, "Do you know her? I heard that she:

_____

_____.
(make something up!)

What's her name? (look at the label) _____

She looks: _____

She feels: _____

What would you tell the principal if you were in this situation? _____

_____.

5. It's time for art class and what do I see? (Giggles) Shh, everyone says, "Be mature, don't be rude, he's painting a nude!"

   Who is the artist? (look at the label): _____

   What is the subject of this painting? _____

   This painting is _____.
   (describe)

   List the colors in this painting: _____ _____ _____ _____

   _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

   What are your favorite colors? _____ _____ _____ _____

   _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

   What happened to the lady? _____

   She is made up of lines, _____, and _____.

   She reminds me of_____.
   (describe)

The hunt is over, but now your stories must be told. It's time to return to the desk, and put your pencils to the test!

A·R·T TELLS A·STORY

SECTION 4

LAMINATED REPRODUCTIONS

NORMAN ROCKWELL, THE YOUNG LADY WITH A SHINER, 1953
ROMARE BEARDEN, SHE-BA, 1970
PSIAX, GREEK, HYDRIA, 530-500 B.C.
PABLO PICASSO, THE PAINTER, 1934
DUANE HANSON, SUNBATHER, 1971

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Hydria by Psiax, Greece, Attic Period.(c. 530-500 B.C.) Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, CT
The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection

Norman Rockwell, ***The Young Lady with a Shiner***, 1953
Gift of Kenneth Stuart

Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, CT

Duane Hanson, ***Sunbather***, 1971
National Endowment For the Arts. Museum Purchase Program with matching funds

Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, CT

Pablo Picasso, ***The Painter***, 1934 Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, CT
The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection

Romare Bearden, ***SHE-BA***, 1970
The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection

Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, CT

A·R·T TELLS A·STORY

SECTION 5

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Section 5

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